

Meeting Minutes-State Interagency Team Meeting

Thursday, July 22, 2021

2:00-3:30

Location: Microsoft Teams

System of Care Priorities:

1. Utilize the Residential Analysis Report to increase the number of children, youth and families served in community settings by investing in community-based supports and focusing on mobile response efforts in Vermont.
2. Continue supporting funding structures that are coordinated and streamlined to the highest extent possible across AHS departments moving away from fee-for-service funding and toward value-based payments.
3. Support statewide services being streamlined and coordinated during and after the pandemic.

Present: Diane Bugbee, Cheryle Wilcox, Laurel Omland, Suzanne Legare Belcher, Danielle Bragg, Kheya Ganguly, Adam Poulin, Karen Price, Sandi Yandow, Alicia Hanrahan, Barb Joyal, Karen Bielawski-Branch, Amy Lincoln Moore, Dana Robson

Regrets: Amy Roth, Beth Sausville, Melanie D'Amico

Agenda Item	Discussion Notes	Next Steps
Reviewing updates from last month (see below) any major updates we all need to know about related to our System of Care (e.g. staffing changes, new programming, policy changes, fiscal, workforce challenges and planning, legislative outcomes)	<p>DMH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health Resources and Services proposal submitted for integrated primary care and should hear by mid-Sept.• Met with DVHA and other depts. to look at potential state planning grant opportunity for mobile crisis.• Children's care managers are very busy right now. There are bottlenecks for residential due to staffing, lack of ability to do home visits. <p>AHS Field Director:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hired a new Field Director, Kerri Duquette-Hoffman, to replace the vacancy when Jane Helmstetter left.• Continue to work on housing-bed bugs have become a big issue especially in the NEK.• 1,134 adults in hotels and 340 children. <p>DAIL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developmental Services Director is under recruitment.• Amy Roth has announced her retirement which will happen later this fall. <p>DVHA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commissioner is still vacant-being posted again• There is a lack of treatment for children and adolescents with eating disorders	

	<p>Family Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling the squeeze with staffing challenges • First time ever struggling to get candidates for office, even Chittenden County • Have had a number of transitions in leadership in central office- Deb Caruso from the Barre District Office is coming to central office as an Operations Manager. • High acuity needs of children and youth <p>AOE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff shortages in education; one division is talking about a new mentor program for special educators. • Recovery funds coming in-much of it going to schools, SEL practices, improvement to ventilation systems, renovating flooring, etc. • Free meals through June 2022 for students. <p>VFN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing from families that a lot are concerned about whether masks will be required when school reopens in the fall to be • Shortage of direct service providers is hitting families hard. • VFN webinar on August 21st about CHINS by Larry Crist, Vermont Parent Rep Center 	
<p>Discussion about LIT Parent Reps: Notes from last month's discussion at Act 264 Board (6-25-21)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Mental Health (DMH) informed the Vermont Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (VFFCMH) that the payment model they have been using to reimburse Parent Representatives has not been in alignment with the Agency of Human Services (AHS) reimbursement policy. • Starting 7/1/21, VFFCMH will implement the pay model changes to reimburse Parent Representatives. • Cheryle will send out the meeting minutes from the State Interagency Team (SIT) meeting to the group, as there was more 	<p>Questions for discussion today:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is providing support and oversight? • How payments are made currently • Recruitment and retention-who is responsible for what? • What is the best model from our perspective? <p>AOE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few years ago, Cindy Tabor and Alicia Hanrahan worked together to get some funding to the Federation. There was a Request for Proposal (RFP), the Federation responded, since Cindy left it has taken time it was for \$15,000 for each year for two years total being \$30,000. • Last fall, Sandi stated they had enough funds for the Act 264 process and wanted the funds instead for 504 and IEP meetings. Alicia had to go back to legal since there was a request from the Federation to change the scope. Alicia is waiting to hear back from the Federation to determine the most appropriate way to utilize the funds. It isn't that AOE isn't willing to provide funding, AOE is just unclear what to do with the funds. 	<p>Provide more clarity to LITs about their role-look at language that already exists about recruitment, appointment to LITs and training/support—do this through writing AND at the next LIT Connections meeting.</p> <p>Think about the Act 264 mandate Statute—it calls for parent voice at SIT, CRC and LIT, but did not include a fiscal note for this support. As well, Act 264 statute</p>

<p>discussion about funding for Parent Representatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there grants that can provide the needed funds for Parent Representative positions? • The group discussed the current grant for Parent Representatives regarding how much Parent Reps. are paid for their work. The language in the grant currently states they are paid through stipends and there is a max of \$50 per day. The group is working to improve the pay and provide an alternative to stipends. • VFFCMH will put together a report of their recommendations regarding the Parent Representative role. Sandi will send the report to the group at least a week before the next Act 264 Advisory Board meeting on July 23rd. • VFFCMH would like to see the Agency of Education (AOE) participate in funding efforts for Parent Representatives. 	<p>Sandi responded that the grant deliverables were about training for LIT parent reps, but no parent reps had been recruited. VFFCMH asked to provide support using these funds AFTER the CSP (e.g. a child needs an eval, assistance navigating the system). Peer navigators. AOE responded talking will be very important with the Federation because they were clear that the Federation asked for funds to go to IEP and 504 meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently the LIT parent reps are contractors and are not employees of the Federation. • We need to ensure there is clear communication to LIT coordinators about the model moving forward. • The grant to the Federation through DMH does speak to the Federation requirement for recruitment of LIT parent reps. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is the role of SIT to put this out as a reminder? Possibly put this as a topic for our next LIT connections meeting. • Idea from Adam Poulin: Patient/advocacy center at UVMMC-a toolkit was built to recruit parent reps. Could this be a resource for our team? • Kheya-in thinking of LITs has not seen an understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supervision, oversight and accountability is not clear with LITs and this is very important • Karen Price-believes it is working for Chittenden county-they hold the parent rep for Chittenden County. She is employed by VFN and she has the training and oversight she needs. She is funded mainly by the Howard Center she also participates in a myriad of activities with the designated agency. She knows how CSPs work. This gives her the insight and knowledge she needs in that county to support parents. Could this kind of working relationship be duplicated in other areas of the state. 	<p>does not include expansion to CSP meeting support, although we all agree that's beneficial.</p> <p>AOE and VFFCMH will meet to clarify the funding that has been set aside (\$30,000) for parent voice.</p>
---	--	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amy Lincoln Moore as a state parent rep helped other LITs recruit other parent reps. This was helpful and worked well at the time. Amy has been supporting many LITs with a decrease in other parent reps. • It would be a lot to require more of LIT Coordinators who are already overwhelmed to do recruitment, etc. The coordinators are from DAs and took on that role without additional funding. • It could be a conflict of interest as well to have the DA recruit and hire when the parent rep should be an impartial advocate who is there to support the parents. • The challenge with Amy's role at the Federation is that she has to choose whether or not to cover vacancies or to cover her VFF role. • The MOU with VFN has ended as of June 30th between VFFCMH and VFN. • VFN primary role is to support families through special education-they get federal funding for this work under IDEA. 	
--	--	--

For reference-notes from last month's SIT:

Agenda	Discussion Notes	Next Steps
Welcome and Department Updates that impact our System of Care <i>(for example-staffing changes, new programming, policy changes, fiscal, workforce challenges and planning, legislative outcomes)</i>	<p>Introductions and welcome to Robyn Freedner-Maguire, who is attending from the Vermont Family Network today and Beth Sausville, Family Services who has joined SIT.</p> <p>DMH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner Emily Hawes and Deputy Commissioner Alison Krompf will be starting on 7/4/21. • A new interagency group is meeting about how to best support Vermonters who come here as immigrants and refugees. • The continuation of vacancies across the state is putting stress on the system at the same time needs are ever present. • Mobile Response in Rutland is moving forward. • Looking into a potential grant proposal integrating mental health care with primary care. Hope this will expand access and help to organize current efforts. • New trauma director Kheya Ganguly is picking up threads where Auburn Watersong left off, including the Resilience Messaging 	

Project, looking at employee data and training and analysis of that data. What are people saying they need.

- Seeing kids with very acute issues and this is creating a backlog in finding placements.
- The perinatal mood disorder grant is finishing up its third year where it piloted in Chittenden, Washington, Rutland, and Franklin counties. Year four will see expansion to regions served by the Designated Agencies HCRS, Lamoille, and UCS by October.

AOE:

- Revising 504 manual re: early ed, tech centers, independent schools. Training will also accompany the manual.
- Work is happening around suspensions and expulsions, including preventing kids under age 8 from being expelled.
- Working on model policy for special education; taking rules and making it user friendly for families and schools. Definitions, etc.
- Concerned about kids returning to school from homeschool programs. AOE is not requiring end of year assessments for kids who are homeschooled this year. Kids who return to in person school can be assessed but will not know progress/status of those who continue to enroll in homestudy.

DCF-Family Services:

- Working on getting workforce back to fully face to face model over the summer.
- Working on guidance for central office team what it can support in a remote option.
- Work across Division around standing up FFPSA (Family First Prevention Services Act), gathering groups to work on different pieces, including contingency of community partners.
- Challenges within system of care are front and center at lower and higher levels of care. Closure of Woodside has had an impact, as well as vacancies in partner community agencies.
- Need teen resources for foster care, hearing about urgent needs in this age group.
- Working on recruitment, including FPF to keep kids in their local communities vs. moving to other areas of the state.
- FFPSA brainstorming with others in thinking about the legislation, have high hopes about what can be done. Framework similar to IFS efforts re: integration of teams and funding.

Field Services:

- Jane Helmstetter departure extended until next week, regions being redefined.
- Supporting ESD re: the 7/1 date that some Vermonters living in hotels will have to leave. They will receive \$2,500 payment to help them transition. There are currently 1,759 adults and 360 children in hotels today. There is concern that the food programs in the hotels will be stopping. Please see attached documents included with these notes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting vaccination outreach <p>CIS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ARP funds – \$55 million focused on childcare assistance, stabilization. Communication going out on how to apply for assistance. Legislature approved a CIS case rate increase beginning 7/1. The rate will be changing from \$514 to \$600. <p>VDH/CSHN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children’s Personal Care direct caregiver payments are still in effect because they follow the Federal State of Emergency, can extend reassessment dates to prevent lapses in services while community reassessments gear up. CSHN respite fund will be transferred to VFN 7/1/21, VFN will have information about the program and how to apply on their website. Respite shifted some time ago from annual renewals. A family must also be connected with a CSHN care coordinator. <p>DVHA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No word yet on new Commissioner <p>DAIL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDSD Director last day was 6/22. Position has been advertised, would like to introduce the new person to SIT when the time is right following hiring, orientation, and onboarding. 	
<p>Discussion regarding parent representation joined by Act 264 Board Members Alice Maynard, Laurie Mulhern, Cinn Smith and Heather Freeman</p>	<p>Recommendation from the Act 264 Board System of Care priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act 264 requires the state to ensure that there is a Parent Representative on every Local Interagency Team and that families have knowledge of and access to Parent Representatives’ services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Act 264 Board and SIT will collaborate during 2021 to review how we might improve the process of recruiting, training, funding, and supporting Parent Representatives. They will produce a document by October 1, 2021 which lists possible improvements and any recommendations they may have. SIT was provided a document prepared by Alice Maynard summarizing the results of the survey regarding parent representatives. Cheryle Wilcox provided an overview and set the stage for this discussion. Act 264 statute requires parent representative at CRC, LIT, SIT, and the Act 264 Board. This is a valued role and funding was increased in recent years to support parent reps at CSP meetings. (See more funding detail below) This funding must flow through a contract moving forward. If there are gaps in funds, VFFFMH must identify and make a formal request as is required by other nonprofits. What are the gaps? What other funding exists that could meet these? 	

SIT members had a chance to respond to the prompt: *In the document, what stands out for you?*

- Struck by many points of agreement, i.e., qualities, different ways we could find them, strategies to train and recruit. Most problematic – what do we exactly expect of our parent representatives? Need to pin this down. How do we pay for it?
- Conversation and dialogue needs to happen around this. What is the right path forward? Not sure it is always communicated how valuable the role is.
- What is the status of compensation for the positions? What is the recommendation? Stipend to full time role.
- Statute only requires LIT, CRC, Act 264 Board, SIT. How do we support parent reps in CSPs? Statute says stipends for the required meetings.
- Need to clarify compensation as it is now. FY 2018-19 Federation changed to reimbursing to \$15/hr. (this is why funding from SIT was increased to cover the gap Cindy Tabor identified for the Federation). Reimbursed not just for CSP and LIT but pre and post meetings. Meetings are broken into segments. LIT rep Burlington compensation is different. MOU from VFN and VFF to reimburse VFN.
- Has heard that other states wish they had the coordination process we have in our state. Emphasized the importance of meeting with a family before a CSP. Afraid it's going to go away. Cheerleader for CSPs. Has done miracles. Has seen it prevent kids from going into higher levels of care.
- Role of the LIT rep was so valued that expanded to CSP, but resources did not align. Stipend model of state requires that it matches with state board reimbursements. Breaking into an hourly for CSPs is where the gap is. A question but also need to acknowledge the state budget process and its impact. The \$15/hr is a conundrum vs. \$50/hr reimbursement for Boards.
- Appreciated the document prepared by Alice. It provided a firm foundation for discussion. Has seen when works well and LITs functioning without. Supportive of becoming full time positions but also concerned about six for entire state. If full time, the question is whether that level of compensation is even enough. Worries that it would be an overwhelming position for someone coming into it. Holds a lot for children and families. Advocates that it be compensated appropriately.

- How do we frame this as a recommendation? I.e, this is what we're looking for. Need to be able to say what this should look like, what we need, what we are recommending.
- It's not a simple issue. One approach is to tease out the issues at each level. Maybe approach in a step fashion. "Never let the perfect stand in the way of the good." Smaller financial steps and go from there. Wrong to let everyone think all is well.
- Federation: If 266 meetings were held, there would be very little difference in \$50/meeting and the \$15/hr billing. Did quick April/May audit. Coverage for 7 of 10 regions was 110 hours. Need to look at data before moving in any direction. Costs will rise when back in person, will need to look at mileage.
- Also need to work within current budget and challenges this presents.
- Re: parent rep role, please consider that this is the first contact for a person in crisis. Many opportunities to participate in subgroups that are very helpful, tie into the role. Interact in a lot of other ways in their communities.
- Does the data show we need six full time staff? How many CSPs and LIT meetings are there? Are there benefits to continuing to do remote support? Leveraging the funds we have.
- Attended many CSPs where parent rep was not there, need more education about this; also making meetings hybrid because there could be two or three CSPs going on at the same time. Probably underreporting how many are held.
- Wish there was a way we could count CSPs. Certainly underreported.
- Need to show consensus around importance of the role. Need to define expectations. Is there a way to log numbers?
- Remembers that in Bennington a few years back that the co-chair called the parent rep and reported the numbers of every CSP they had.
- VFF collects a lot of data. Have had a goal to see how we can support more CSPs being done. Have data for every CSP a rep has been paid for – cost and number. Numbers for state rep as well when covers in the absence of other rep. No parent rep in Bennington for the last two years.
- VFF contract ends June 30th. Concerned about CSPs scheduled for July and August. Reassured by DMH that the grant is ready and have

	been waiting for input from Federation—grant is retroactive to July 1 st .	
Wrap Up and Next Steps	Some members of SIT will be attending the Act 264 Board meeting tomorrow where the dialogue about parent representation will continue. Highlights will be reported back to SIT at our July 22 nd meeting.	